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# Aspect Instruction and Narrative Inferencing

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# ASPECT INSTRUCTION AND NARRATIVE INFERENCING

By

Christine M. Wytaske

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in English as a Second Language.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in the complex dynamics of language and how much diversity we encounter when communicating. More specifically, how we use language to communicate clearly with the intentional use of specific choice of language forms and meanings (i.e., the way we construct thought consciously and strategically in order to communicate the correct meaning of what we intend to say and have received). Interestingly this is only one side of the equation. The way communication is perceived by a listener affects the interpretation of the communication, regardless of the intended meaning on the part of the speaker. This complex interplay among speakers and listeners, in addition to language being utilized, is a fascinating topic, which I plan to delve more deeply into during this research.

The idea to conduct a study specifically on teaching aspect explicitly came to me while taking Research Methodology at Hamline University, taught by Professor Andreas Schramm in the fall of 2010. Midway through this online course, Professor Schramm posted an article written by Cynthia Lee (2010), for anyone interested in some extra reading. I was intrigued by the information in this article, which looked specifically at the interlanguage pragmatic comprehension of young learners of English.

As I began exploring the topic of aspect, I became more aware of the importance of understanding the difference between tense and aspect in the language system, more details on which will be given in subsequent chapters of this thesis. One thing that has always challenged and intrigued me, when interacting

with a learner of English (whether a native speaker or a non-native speaker), is when I bump up against my own limitations when trying to explain something to help a learner understand the finer nuances of English usage (syntax, morphology, semantics, register, etc). I come to a point where my internal dialogue defaults to something like *“This is the way I’ve always used it,”* or *“Just because, but I don’t really know why.”* When I arrive at this humbling roadblock while trying to understand my own thought process in regard to word choice or usage, I proactively want to dig deeper. For these reasons, I have decided to research the importance of explicitly teaching aspect in the English grammar system. I have experienced first-hand the importance of being overtly made aware of why I am learning something new in order to better understand the concepts or structures at a deeper level to aid in the transfer of rationale to new areas.

### Background

Professor Schramm wrote his dissertation on aspect and causal inferences, which was sparked by his desire as a learner of English to better understand the differences between the following statements: “She lives in St. Paul.” vs “She is living in St. Paul.” (Schramm, 1998) This type of differentiation is similar to instances I have encountered while teaching or tutoring ELLs (English Language Learners). I could explain the difference in verb tense and time indications, but my lack of understanding of the area of aspect had left me at a loss to further delineate the nuances in statements like the ones mentioned above. This inability on my part to further explain, left my students with an incomplete understanding and unanswered questions about the deeper meanings behind word and

morphosyntactic choices at the sentence level, connected to the semantic domain of aspect. Whereas tense is known to represent time, or temporal reference, in language relative to a speaker's *now*, aspect represents a greater 'viewpoint' in language relative to other situations known as perfective and imperfective. Many linguists subscribe to a broadened understanding of the definition of aspect in which a given language may have a variety of options in representing the time (tense) of a situation, independent of the position in time the given situation occupies (Klein, 1994). Comrie (1976), for example, classifies *perfective aspect* as 'non-progressive' and 'completed' and *imperfective aspect* as 'habitual' and 'continuous'. There are various ways of viewing and representing the time course of a situation. Two main types found in literature are as follows: the situation is seen as either 'completed' or the situation is seen as 'not-completed' or 'ongoing' (Klein, 1994) vs. the situation is seen 'from outside' or this situation is seen 'from inside' (Smith, 1986). The semantic domain of aspect, i.e., lexical as well as viewpoint aspect, will be discussed in greater detail later in this body of work.

After speaking with Professor Schramm, I realized I was both fascinated as well as frustrated by the topic of aspect, partly because as a native speaker of American English aspect wasn't explicitly taught to me at any time during my academic career. From the time I was in grade school, I have had a strong innate sense for English grammar. However, when it comes to the more complex idea of aspect I feel underprepared to explain the nuances clearly. Due to this experience, I strongly feel that by learning more about the aspectual meanings in English, teachers, like me, who work with English language learners may be better prepared

to work with these students in their classrooms by giving them strategies for understanding aspect.

### Guiding Questions

This motivation helped me to narrow my research question further to: Does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context? Could this, then, translate into continued understanding of aspectual forms over time as seen on a delayed posttest? In other words, does explicit teaching contribute to integration into a learner's knowledge base for later acquisition and not just lead to intake?

There is previous research that directly relates to the topic of aspect comprehension in narrative context, as done by Schramm (1998) in his research or his dissertation on native English speaker comprehension of aspect and also non-native speaker research done by Meidal (2008), Feyder(2010), and Kivimagi (2013). These studies differed in their applications of implicit and explicit teaching techniques. One commonality in the above-mentioned studies is the use of narratives to collect data on aspect learning in context. Next, I will briefly review each of these studies.

Meidal's (2008) research used the same narratives from Schramm's work to identify whether English language learners would notice aspectual forms within the narratives and recognize their impact on meaning. Meidal was interested in implicit uptake of these forms and learners were not directly and explicitly taught perfective and imperfective aspects. Meidal chose to highlight these forms with narrative texts, using different font/color, to help learners notice the forms. While her study

showed that this strategy did help learners notice the forms, it did not transfer into learner's subsequent ability to make correct inferences.

Feyder's (2010) research focused on both explicit and implicit aspect instruction increasing elementary student reader's ability to apply proper inferencing strategies. Like Meidal, Feyder found that learners did not clearly distinguish between the meaning of perfective and imperfective aspects after instruction. However, Feyder felt that there was some reflection on various strategies that could be made in future research that could lead to improved results.

Kivimagi's (2013) research focused on the acquisition of perfective and imperfective aspect in narrative context with university level students using explicit instruction and utilizing the tool of textual enhancements. Kivimagi's results showed that students did benefit from a combination of explicit instruction and text enhancement. One suggestion made by Kivimagi for future research was to incorporate a delayed post-test to test for retention. This previous research, as well as others, will be highlighted in the literature review chapter of this document. The present study seeks to discover if explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English leads to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context. I also predict that by teaching these features explicitly, greater comprehension will lead to greater retention over time should be achieved.

For this study, I will use narratives in the context of reading to explicitly teach the function of aspect in the narrative context to a small group of advanced learners. These participants will be given a pre-assessment to provide a baseline for measuring understanding of aspect prior to any instruction. They will then be given

a set of narratives as an immediate post-test in order to measure growth after the students have been given instruction, some guided practice, and independent practice opportunities. Lastly, I plan to give a delayed post-test set of narratives to test for retention of the intervention over time.

### Summary and Chapter Overviews

In this introduction chapter, I have explained my interest in and the overall importance of my research topic, the importance of explicitly teaching aspect and have briefly outlined how this research will be conducted. In the Chapter Two, I will discuss previously conducted research relevant to explicit teaching, noticing of forms, and the meaning of tense and aspect. Chapter Three includes a description of the research design and methodology that is utilized in this study. Results and findings are provided in Chapter Four. Finally, in Chapter Five, I reflect on collected data. I also discuss the limitations of this study, recommendations for classroom application, and implications for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

For this section, I will discuss general background of aspect, cover relevant terminology, touch on two schools of thought regarding approaches to teaching language features (implicit vs. explicit), and discuss data from some of the previous research done regarding the teaching to and learning of aspect by non-native speakers in the English language system. This current study sets out to see if students who are explicitly taught imperfective and perfective aspectual forms will show greater understanding of inferences made while reading narrative text. The research questions being addressed are: Does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context? Does a delayed post-test show that explicit teaching contributes to integration into a learner's knowledge base for later acquisition and not just lead to intake?

### Aspect

Aspect was chosen for this study because it is important at the sentence level as well as in discourse (Schramm & Mensink, 2016). Aspect is difficult for students of English to acquire and requires special attention for students to learn (Andersen & Sharai, 1996). Aspect can be defined as a semantic or grammatical notion. "Semantically, aspect refers to the internal, temporal 'shape' of a situation or event, whether it is ongoing or completed, instantaneous, or iterative, etc. Grammatically, aspect refers to the verbal inflections that reflect this semantic domain." (Payne, 2006) A simpler definition of aspect comes from *Language Files* and states:

A grammatical category (usually of verbs) related to the notions of completeness or incompleteness of an action (e.g. in the sentence “We are working”, the aspect is progressive indicating that the action of working is still in progress [i.e., not complete]) (2001, pp.490).

Grammatical aspect is frequently confused with tense. They are both semantic domains that work together and are expressed by the English verb system. Tense relates the time of a situation being described to the time of utterance, (also called time of speaking). Tense expresses three relationships in the English system: past, present, and future (Comrie, 1976). While many refer to the simple, the perfects, and the progressive as tenses, these are actually aspects of the English language.

Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, (1999) provides a chart of morphosyntactic tense-aspect combinations in English, represented as Table 1 below. The authors use this chart to help differentiate between tense and aspect and show the tense-aspect combinations, using the verbs *write* and *walk*. This representation shows that what are sometimes presented as the ‘12 tenses’ are in actuality 12 combinations of tense and aspect. Herein lies why there is so much confusion over this issue of aspect, different texts and classifications treat these forms inconsistently. There has been a shift over the years causing the lines between tense and aspect to become blurred. The terms *tense-aspect system* and *tense-aspect combinations* are not synonymous. “We feel that if the natural division between tense (which relates to time) and aspect (which has to do with the internal structure of the action occurring at a time) are dealt with separately at first, the systems that



result from their subsequent combination is much easier to see, therefore easier to learn.” (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999: 110)

Table 1: English Tense-Aspect Combinations (adapted from Celce-Mercia, 1999:110)

	Simple	Perfect	Progressive	Perfect Progressive
	Ø	have + -en	be + -ing	have + -en be + -ing
Present:	write/writes walk/walks	has/have written has/have walked	am/is/are writing am/is/are walking	has/have been walking has/have been walking
Past:	wrote walked	had written had walked	was/were writing was/were walking	had been writing had been walking
Future:	will write will walk	will have written will have walked	will be writing will be walking	will have been writing will have been walking

The term aspect comes from Slavic linguistics, where verb marking focuses on whether events are viewed as being complete (not in a state of flux) or incomplete (in progress or otherwise conveying a sense of change). (“Tense vs Aspect,” 2010). There are two general components in respect to aspect: Lexical aspect (or situation aspect) and grammatical aspect (or viewpoint aspect) (Smith, 1997). Lexical aspect is the lexical meaning of the verb (which may convey aspectual meaning) and its inseparable relationship to corresponding arguments (subject, objects) to ensure meaning. Verbs can be further categorized according to their aspectual meaning, as follows (Li & Shirai, 2000):

**Stative verbs:** Cognition verbs: *believe, hate, know, like, enjoy, understand*, etc.

Relation verbs: *be, belong, contain, have, own, resemble*, etc.

**Dynamic verbs:** Punctual verbs→Acts: *hit, jump, eat, kick, throw*, etc.

Durative verbs→Activities: *eat, run walk, work, write*, etc.

Processes: *become, change, flow, learn*, etc.

According to Vendler (1967), a composite of three features, dynamics, telicity, and punctuality make four types of English verbs. These three features serve to separate verbs according to their specific components or characteristics for usage. Dynamics

represent energy that a verb requires in order to produce movement, (e.g., *He is running*). Telicity indicates an endpoint or goal that an action has to achieve, (e.g., *He is running to catch the bus*). Punctuality stands for an instantaneous point in time, (e.g., *He caught the bus*). Accordingly, lexical aspect has been categorized into four types: states, activities, accomplishments and achievements (Vendler, 1967). Some verbs that would fall into these categories would be love, hate, be (*states*); run, act, draw (*activities*); write, read, become (*accomplishments*); and win, attain, award (*achievements*).

Klein (1994) discusses lexical (situational) aspect as the time properties of a given sentence in terms of time periods or states. He utilizes a scale indicating 0-state, 1-state, and 2-state lexical contents. A 0-state lexical statement has no beginning point and no end point (Vendler's states). The statement "Sean likes to build Legos," has no beginning point and no ending point. This statement does not indicate when he began to like building Legos. Neither does it have an endpoint because there is no point that he ceases to like building Legos indicated in the above utterance.

A 1-state sentence has a beginning and an ending point (Vendler's activities). "Sean built Legos," would be a 1-state classification. There would be a point where Sean started to build Legos, and an end, when he finally finished building Legos. There were many times both before and after when Sean wasn't building Legos. 1-state sentences can be tested by putting a timeframe on the event. "Sean builds Legos for two days" is clear when compared to the 0-state with an applied timeframe, "Sean likes to build Legos for two days."

For a statement to be classified in the category of 2-state, there needs to be before-event and after-event contrast (two distinct states, each with its own time; Vendler's accomplishments and achievements). These statements include a source state and a target state, indicates Klein, "where pre-time and post-time are lexically characterized, rather than being defined in purely temporal terms." (1994, p.105). For example, in "Sean built Legos" there is the state before the Legos are built and the state after he is done building. This can be demonstrated when putting 2-state situations in the progressive: "Sean was building legos when his mom called him for dinner, so he finished his lego assembly after dinner (was finished).

According to Smith, cited in Schramm (1998), grammatical or viewpoint aspect is what makes the temporal contents of a situation 'visible'. The extent of exactly how much of that situation becomes visible varies because depending on viewpoint, the focus can be on different parts of any given situation.

Grammatical aspect, which includes imperfective (progressive) aspect (be + -ing) and perfective aspect (have + past participle), is processed at the sentence level and is useful for discourse sequencing (Klein, 1994). It represents a viewpoint by making a situation 'visible'. These classifications, or aspectual distinctions, may be represented as fixed or changing, can be treated as momentary or durational, and can be viewed as complete or ongoing, as mentioned earlier. The 'viewpoint' highlights what a speaker intends to communicate in a situation or context. "It is important in processing the linguistic code related to aspect, to distinguish the asserted semantic meanings of viewpoint aspects and their inferred pragmatic meanings. This distinction allows us to identify whether speakers, non-native or

native, only process forms in isolation or within their communicative context.”

(Schramm, 1998: 32) In summary, aspect can be used to guide learners’ understanding of a text.

A niche that this research hopes to fill builds on previous research by Meidal and Kivimagi. Meidal (2008) noted that future research should incorporate more explicit instruction before the study begins on specifically what readers should pay attention to because this addition could assist with students noticing and attending to aspect beforehand. Kivimagi (2013) recommended performing a delayed post-test to test for students’ ability to apply what they had learned and check for retention. My research seeks to find out if explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English leads to greater understanding of aspectual meanings as shown by intake, and once there whether intake (as measured by immediate post-test) is retained over time (as measured by the delayed post-test).

#### Awareness in Language Acquisition

The concept of noticing has gained attention in recent years in the field of SLA: Nothing is learned unless it is noticed, asserts Schmidt (2001, p. 30). While learning Portuguese, Schmidt became aware that certain linguistic forms entered his internal language system only when he noticed them (Iwanaka & Takatsuka, 2010). With this awareness, in addition to psychological learning theories, he formulated the Noticing Hypothesis, which basically states that learners of a new language can’t acquire linguistic forms until they become aware of these forms during input. (Schmidt, 2001)

Noticing is a necessary component for students to connect form to meaning. Students must first notice the form in order to learn that form's meaning. One good way for students to notice a form is to have teachers draw attention to it (Schmidt, 1990). In order for students to acquire language components like syntax and morphology, they must notice the meanings of the words and morphemes and the order of the words (Schmidt, 2001). Some researchers are not convinced that noticing is an appropriate method for teaching aspect and feel that, in addition to noticing, aspectual structures should be explicitly attended to and instructed on because of the complexity of aspect and its forms (Meidal, 2008). It is worth noting that in some cases, either when the form is not recognized or the meaning is unclear or unknown, students will be unable to connect form and meaning (Gass, 1988). This is where teacher intervention is key. Teachers can aid students in understanding the meaning and also point out specific forms to help students get clarification and to make these important connections. When students know meaning, attention can be drawn to form by enhancing the text.

Tomlin and Villa (1994) believe that learners must be able to hold a form in working memory long enough for a connection between that form and its meaning to occur. Changing the font can create salience of a grammatical form that can enhance noticing and make meaning easier to grasp (Han, Park, & Combs, 2008). Manipulating the text by changing the font size or color, or capitalizing/italicizing letters is a technique to enhance noticing and is called textual enhancement (Sharwood-Smith, 1993). Textual enhancements indicate changing the text for better visual input. Some studies have shown that noticing of grammar forms

increases because of textual enhancement (VanPatten, 2002). However, it is worth noting textual enhancement of morpho-syntactic forms connected with aspectual meanings did not yield conclusive results in a previous study (Meidal, 2008), perhaps because input is processed for meaning before form.

There has been much debate over the years about the best way to teach and to learn grammar. Early tendencies showed teachers as the experts who were expected to explicitly teach students what they wanted them to learn. Over time, it was apparent that this explicit instruction strategy does not provide learning opportunities for all students, who have varying needs. Consequently, there was a shift in the field to the belief that students learn best in the most natural environment, associated with implicit instruction. Krashen (1982) and others believe that students learn best in an environment where instruction is implicit and there is a communicative learning opportunity. Under this model, language is not taught explicitly. Nevertheless, further research such as Harley (1998) showed students continue to make mistakes even when they are immersed in a language, in a communicative learning environment where language is learned implicitly. This has led researchers in the field to consider a more blended approach; one where there is still a need for explicit instruction of some structures.

Explicit teaching is thought to be more effective than implicit instruction according to numerous researchers (Alanen (1995), Harley (1998), and Robinson (1997) as cited in Radwan, 2005). Explicit teaching is defined as explaining a rule directly, instead of expecting a learner to inductively discover the meaning (DeKeyser, 1998). This type of instruction is preferred when the focus is on

producing specific learning outcomes by breaking a subject or topic down into its more minute, distinguishable components. Students taught with explicit grammar lessons, immediately followed up with concrete example and opportunity for guided and independent practice outperformed students taught only implicitly (Ellis, 2002). Schmidt (1990) and others, (Gregg, 1984; Odlin, 1986) argue that implicit knowledge is more complex when dealing with students who are learning additional languages. As stated in Meidal, (2008)

Schmidt believes that it is highly implausible for “incidental learning “ to occur with adult L2 speakers of English. Instead, the connection between attention and awareness is necessary for linking the individual differences in language learning to instructional formalities.

Additionally, Bardovi-Harlig (1994) suggested that learner’s language proficiency should be taken into account on the grounds that it is likely to play a role in the developmental stages of tense-and-aspect acquisition (Bardovi-Harlig, 1998). Language proficiency levels seem to have a direct correlation to development of tense and aspect (Bardovi-Harlig, 1994).

The two components of aspect discussed earlier have been investigated in SLA as well; lexical aspect, which represents types of situations, and grammatical aspect, which represents a viewpoint (i.e., makes a situation visible). According to Anderson & Shirai (1994), the central claim of what is known as the Aspect Hypothesis is “first and second language learners will initially be influenced by the inherent semantic aspect of verbs or predicates in the acquisition of tense and aspect markers associated with or affixed to these verbs” (1994, p.133). In

summary, a majority of previously conducted studies support the aspect hypothesis. The effect of lexical aspect on verb inflections appears to be succinct (Tseng & Tsai, 2008).

The above-mentioned research lends credence to my study involving advanced level adult learners of English and their learning of aspect. A gap in the research, as noted by Kivimägi's 2013 study, that will be filled by this study is to test students' retention of aspectual forms by running a delayed post-test using the narratives. As indicated by Schramm (Schramm & Mensink, 2016), further research into aspectual input and intake is needed with a particular focus on differentiating the semantic and pragmatic functions of perfective and imperfective aspect. My overall research question asks "Does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context?" By giving an immediate post-test and a delayed post-test, I will be able to add to the existing body of research in this area.

#### Cognitive Processing of Aspect in Narratives

In Schramm's 1998 study, native English speaking adults read simple narrative texts to see how linguistic aspect affects mental representations of causal relations and how readers use aspect to form causal relations. For his next study, Schramm adapted his narratives to include a gap (or a coherence break). Results showed greater improvement for narratives containing the imperfective aspect than for the perfective aspect. For the third experiment, Schramm used verbal protocols to determine what had been retained in the participants' short-term memory, during reading the situation that triggered a later inference. It was again found that



imperfective aspect tends to be more activated in a reader's short-term memory than perfective aspects. In 2006, Clahsen & Felser claimed that comparative studies of adult second-language learners have led to a preliminary understanding of language processing differences between language learners and native speakers of a given language. According to Schramm, (Schramm & Mensink, 2016), additional studies of less proficient advanced learners from a variety of first languages are needed that compare their second-language morphological-semantic and grammatical development with processing in native speakers.

By conducting this study with my research focus wondering if explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English leads to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context, I will add to previously completed research by addressing the need for research using less-proficient advanced learners from a variety of first languages. I will also add to the body of existing research by conducting a delayed post-test. Students will be given a delayed post-test in order to measure whether aspectual meanings are retained over time (30 days) post instruction.

In the upcoming section, I will discuss the details of the study, including the participants, materials used, timing of events, and method I have chosen to conduct my research.

### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter will outline in detail the specific method(s) I used for data collection, i.e., pre-assessment, posttest, and delayed posttest, and explain why this method of research was chosen. I will provide details about the participants used in the study, and provide general information regarding where the study took place and when. I will also describe the materials used in this study. This study is specifically being conducted to look at the value of explicitly teaching aspect to advanced level adult ELLs and to see if these results are retained over time. Does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context?

The participants of this study consisted of eight students from an adult English-learning program in the Midwestern United States. All participants were adult, college-aged learners of English, classified at an advanced to proficient level of English as determined by their program admission paperwork. All students in the study scored between a 5.0 and 10.0 GLE on the TABE metrics. None of the participants graduated from a high school in the United States; all eight participants received secondary education elsewhere. The participants in this study represent the following nationalities: Vietnamese, Chinese, French-Canadian, Mexican, and Indian. This study began on April 20, 2016 and lasted 35 days, ending on May 25, 2016.

#### General Overview

The participants were given a pre-test assessment in order to provide a baseline of their current understanding of aspect. Then participants were given

instruction on perfective and imperfective aspect. The materials used to conduct this study, and for teaching aspect to the treatment group, were approximately 15 narratives, created and used in previous research by Andreas Schramm (1998). Five narratives were used for pre-test, another five were used for the immediate post-test and another five were used for the delayed post-test. For instructional purposes, I used Feyder's narratives. These narratives were written for elementary learners and contain the lexical aspect of accomplishment. (Feyder, 2010)

### Research Paradigm

I decided to utilize a quantitative method of research because this allowed me to study one group of students, from one location. Quantitative research “generally starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out (e.g., a study comparing students’ test results before and after an instructional treatment)”. (Mackey & Gass, 2005) Quantitative research is also verifiable, meaning it can be replicated by another researcher where similar results would be possible. Quantitative research can also be generalized, meaning the results are not only achievable at my site or in my situation, other researchers at other locations could achieve similar results. These characteristics make using a quantitative research model a good choice for my research.

### Participants

This study took place in an Intermediate Reading classroom within an ABE program from a Midwestern state. Participants chose to be part of this research and were all part of the same regular classroom, learning the same content with the

overall goal of English improvement. I am the regular instructor of this class and students receive regular explicit grammar instruction as well as reading comprehension and fluency practice on a daily basis. The research took place during three class periods, each class period is three hours long, and research testing and instruction took about 75 minutes to complete spanning these three days. The students had an English reading proficiency of at least a 5.0 and a language proficiency of at least a 4.5 on the TABE. The Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) is a diagnostic test used to determine a person's skill level and aptitude in three academic areas: reading, mathematics, and language. These assessments are published by McGraw-Hill and are used by most Adult Basic Education sites for student assessment and placement into programs. TABE scores correlate to GE (grade-level equivalency) scores ranging from 0-12.9. These scores are approximate equivalents to the K-12 educational system used in the United States. This means a student who scores a 6.8 on a TABE reading assessment, is reading between a sixth and a seventh grade level in English.

Students' ages, native languages, countries of origin, and number of years studying English were not a factor in being selected for this research study; however, participating students were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire. A total of eight students participated in this research study. Participants ranged in age from 25-61 and represented the following native languages: French, Vietnamese, Telugu, Spanish, Nepali, and Chinese.

### Location

This research took place at a small ABE site, in an Intermediate Reading classroom in a Midwestern state. Each student had her or his own desk, chair, and reading/writing space as well as her or his own set of materials. I administered the consent forms, student questionnaire, and pre-test in paper form on day one of the study. Using the five stories chosen for instruction, students were given two guided practice opportunities for the remainder of the first day, where I explicitly instructed students on aspect and causal inferencing within narrative texts. We discussed the textual enhancements and their relation to previously learned progressive vs. simple forms (orange vs. blue text, respectively). During the second class, I gave the students one more guided practice session, briefly reviewing what was instructed on day one, and then students did two stories for independent practice. I monitored for comprehension and gave feedback where needed. Finally, students took the immediate post-tests using another five narratives.

### Materials

The narratives used in this study were taken from Schramm (1998) and used by Meidal (2008) and Kivimagi (2013) to test acquisition of aspectual meaning. The quantitative method of collecting data was the pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test. This was recommended by both Meidal (2008), Feyder (2010), and Kivimagi (2013) for future research as it related to their studies. Previously Mackey and Gass (2005) stated that pre- and post-tests show the effect of the teaching intervention immediately following instruction. Using this structure allowed me a baseline for comparison to measure what my students knew prior to

instruction with respect to aspect. Each of the narratives required participants to make inferences about the end of the narrative as it related to the aspect used within the narrative text.

Table 2: *Moving in*-(Methodology)

<b><i>Sentence</i></b>	<b><i>Causal Structure</i></b>
(1) Carl and Miriam had been dating for several years.	Setting
(2) He recently asked her to move in with him, and she had promised to let him know by today.	Initiating Event
(3) It was almost noon, and he had been checking his e-mail account all morning to see if she had said yes.	
(4) But Miriam had been very busy in the morning and did not have time to write him her positive answer.	
(5) She finally <i>was sending</i> / <i>sent</i> the message.	Antecedent 1
(6) Then, her financial agent called to tell her that he had just spoken with Carl about their joint stock market portfolio's terrible performance.	Antecedent 2
(7) During the call Miriam's eyes wandered across the room.	Filler
(8) She saw the dishes on the table, and her eyes rested on a picture of her favorite Dali painting she put up many years ago.	Filler
(9) The rest of the room was hard to make out because the curtains were drawn.	Filler
(10) Meanwhile, Carl was feeling extremely depressed.	Consequent
(11) M E _ _ _ _ _	Word Completion
(12) Why was Carl feeling depressed?	Final Question

In order to avoid testing bias, the aspectual condition (imperfective vs. perfective) of pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test narratives was randomly assigned; however, all participants received the same 15 narratives overall. The order of the narratives was, likewise, randomized. In the example from Table 3, the word to be completed in the word completion task is M E \_ \_ \_ \_ , referring back to the word “message” in antecedent 1 of the narrative. It was important that students completed this task as quickly as possible (within 15-20 seconds) because the word was presumably reactivated in long term working memory when the student later read the consequent. Participants who were unable to complete the word completion task or who completed the task incorrectly by choosing a word other than the antecedent, may not have processed the meaning of the imperfect and were therefore not inferring the connection between antecedent 1 and the consequent.

Finally, participants were asked to complete a comprehension question at the end of each narrative to see if the participant was able to integrate aspectual meanings in their memory’s representation of each story. For narratives given the imperfective treatment, antecedent 1 and antecedent 2 could all be potential causes for the consequent, which was the event reflected in the final question. Essentially, Carl was either depressed because he had to keep checking his email, because Miriam had been too busy to send him her positive answer, or because she sent him the message with no for an answer. For narratives given the perfective treatment, antecedent 3 is much less likely a cause for the final event because it was a completed action (i.e., Miriam sent the message). In this case, participants will likely infer that Miriam sent him a message, telling him no.

### Procedure

On day one, students were given five narratives in randomized order, to use as a pre-test assessment, to establish a baseline for comparison. I worked with the group for the next 15 minutes to model the noticing of aspect using two different narratives. For 30 minutes during the next class period the following day, we did one more narrative for guided practice and students did two more for independent practice. The participants were pre-taught relevant vocabulary and we discussed how noticing and inferencing are also important components of understanding narrative text. (See Table 2 for an example where the words *stock market*, *portfolio*, *curtains*, and *Dali painting* were discussed prior to reading the text.)

Table 3: *Moving In*

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Carl and Miriam had been dating for several years. He recently asked her to move in with him, and she had promised to let him know by today. It was almost noon, and he had been checking his e-mail account all morning to see if she had said yes. But Miriam had been very busy in the morning and did not have time to write him her positive answer. She finally *was sending* / *sent* the message. Then, her financial agent called to tell her that he had just spoken with Carl about their joint stock market portfolio's terrible performance. During the call Miriam's eyes wandered across the room. She saw the dishes on the table, and her eyes rested on a picture of her favorite Dali painting she put up many years ago. The rest of the room was hard to make out because the curtains were drawn. Meanwhile, Carl was feeling extremely depressed.

M E \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

F E \_ \_ \_

Why was Carl feeling so depressed?

---

At the end of the lesson, participants were given an immediate post-test, using another five narratives. On day thirty, I gave the last set of five narratives, as a delayed post-test, to measure retention over time and possible acquisition. Students



used the Word Completion Paradigm to complete a word edge, used by Schramm during his research studies. A word edge is a long-term working memory (LTWM) test in which a participant receives a word with the first letter or two given and the rest of the letters need to be filled in. This shows if the word is active in the LTWM based on what they fill in. The prediction is that if the story is in the imperfective, the word to be filled in will more likely be in LTWM so participants would complete this word-edge correctly. Students also answered questions at the end of each story for comprehension check. Table 2 shows a sample story.

#### Instruction

After the pre-tests were administered, the students were taught a lesson about imperfective and perfective aspect. This was recommended by both Meidal (2008) and Kivimägi (2010), as a way to explicitly draw attention to the meaning of grammatical forms. It was suggested that this would be a valuable teaching intervention for future research. Participants were given direct instruction regarding aspect and encouraged to 'notice' the enhanced forms within the narratives. The explicit instruction included a metalinguistic explanation of perfective aspect and its boundedness (completeness) and of imperfective aspect and its unboundedness (durativeness).

Participants' attention was drawn to the fact that these features impact discourse by reviewing what we already know about perfective aspect (simple past tense) and imperfective aspect (past progressive tense). Participants are familiar with the teacher using a color-coding system to highlight grammatical features, so I tied my textual enhancements to that system. Students were told that for the

purposes of this study, the narratives would include either blue or orange textual enhancements. Blue color was used to indicate perfective aspect and orange color was used to indicate imperfective aspect.

I put an example on the whiteboard and walked participants through the chart (see Figure 1):

SIMPLE PAST “Perfective”	PAST PROGRESSIVE “Imperfective”
<u>(VERB)-ed/*(Irregular)</u>	<u>was/were</u> + <u>(VERB)-ing</u>
<div> <div>now</div> <div>past__X____ ____future</div> </div>	<div> <div>now</div> <div>past__X...X_ ____future</div> </div>
Ex. She <u>ate</u> the pizza. (completed action)	Ex. She <u>was eating</u> the pizza. (ongoing action/incomplete)

Figure 1: Grammar Intervention-Explanation of Perfective vs. Imperfective

### Data Analysis

The pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed post-tests were analyzed for semantic aspectual content. For the word completion task and for the comprehension question, each narrative was coded as either ‘present’ or ‘absent.’ If the participant correctly completed the partial word from the word completion task, the answer was ‘present’ and scored as a ‘1’. If the participant left the partial word blank or filled it in with an incorrect response, it was coded as ‘absent’ and scored as a ‘0’. These responses were scored as either ‘present’ or ‘absent’, regardless of the

narrative being given the perfective or imperfective treatment. It was anticipated that if the narrative were given the perfective treatment, the correct completion of the word completion task would occur less frequently in these instances.

Similarly, with respect to the comprehension question, answers were coded as either 'present' or 'absent'. If a participant did not mention either antecedent or if the participant didn't answer the question at all, it was coded as 'absent' and scored a '0'. If the narrative was given the perfective treatment, responses mentioning antecedent 1 were also coded as 'absent' and scored a '0' because when in the perfective, antecedent 1 should not be active because it is a completed action, therefore antecedent 2 is the better option. All other answers were coded as 'present' and scored a '1'. Statistical analyses were run on the data collected in this study. For all responses, I calculated the means, their standard deviation, and made comparisons among the treatments. This showed whether my results could be generalized and, therefore, useful for other researchers in the future.

#### Data Verification

Reliability of data was ensured by the 'equivalence of forms' that occurred throughout the narratives selected for use in the pre-tests, post-tests, and delayed post-tests used in this study. Equivalence of forms means narratives were the same level of difficulty and were randomly assigned (Gass & Mackey, 2005). In order to ensure inter-rater reliability, I utilized an additional rater when coding the data for the word-edge completion task and the comprehension question. We coded about 15% of the data together to establish a baseline, and we discussed any areas where disagreement occurred in order to reach agreement. We then coded an additional

20% separately and compared our results, which were in agreement. I coded the remaining data independently. I believe the research to be reliable because it can be replicated by other researchers in the future.

### Ethics

All participants used in this research study participated on a voluntary basis. Prior to initiating the study, I gave a brief general description of what the study was looking at (grammar, how it's taught, and how students learn). Any student choosing not to participate was able to opt out of the research study at that time. I then provided a written consent form, which outlined the parameters of the study, for them to read and sign. Again, students were given the option to not participate. Participants were assured that this was completely voluntary and that their anonymity was guaranteed. Upon beginning, participants were given a practice narrative and they were told what their expected role was during the research study. Any answers provided by participants were collected and used verbatim and no liberties were taken to change their responses. Upon completion of each round of narratives, the data was collected and stored. I did not fully compile the data until all the testing and data collection had been completed. I will store the narratives securely in a locked file cabinet in my home office for seven years, as required, before shredding them.

### Conclusion

This chapter has included various details regarding how and when this study was conducted. I have outlined the materials used and the methods chosen to best conduct this study. By comparing the pre-test data, post-test data, and delayed post-

test data, I was able to demonstrate the value of explicitly teaching aspect to learners of English. Using the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest for data collection enabled me to compare results over time to measure for growth and also for retention. In Chapter Four, I will discuss the data collected from this study and what those results indicated.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the results found in this study. Pre, post, and delayed post-test data will be shown and analyzed. This study posited the following questions: *Does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context? Does a delayed post-test show that explicit teaching contributes to integration into a learner's knowledge base for later acquisition and not just lead to intake?* I used two procedures to collect data to answer these questions: word-edge completion for comprehension in working memory and question-answering for long-term memory comprehension. The first data collection point occurred immediately at the end of each narrative. It was a word-edge completion task possibly referring back to Antecedent 1 in the narrative. The second data collection point occurred after the narrative and after the word-edge completion task. Students were asked to answer a comprehension question in which Antecedent 1 may have been the answer.

To ensure inter-rater reliability, an additional rater was used when compiling the data from the comprehension tasks. This rater has used these stories in past research, so was familiar with the stories as well as the procedure for coding. We went through approximately 15% of the narrative responses, and then compared our coding results. If our results didn't match, we discussed the reason for the difference and arrived at a solution 100% of the time. We then coded another 20%, and found we were in 100% agreement on the way we coded the responses.

For this study, I was looking at the retrieval of information from both long-term working memory (LTWM) and long-term memory (LTM). I anticipated that the results would show that students would be aided in their ability to make correct inferences based on their understanding and recall of aspectual meanings connected with forms and relate these meanings to the overall boundedness or unboundedness of the situations with the aspect manipulation.

Table 4: *Moving in-(Working Memory)*

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>Causal Structure</b>
(1) Carl and Miriam had been dating for several years.	Setting
(2) He recently asked her to move in with him, and she had promised to let him know by today.	Initiating Event
(3) It was almost noon, and he had been checking his e-mail account all morning to see if she had said yes.	
(4) But Miriam had been very busy in the morning and did not have time to write him her positive answer.	
(5) She finally <i>was sending</i> / <i>sent</i> the message.	Antecedent 1
(6) Then, her financial agent called to tell her that he had just spoken with Carl about their joint stock market portfolio's terrible performance.	Antecedent 2
(7) During the call Miriam's eyes wandered across the room.	Filler
(8) She saw the dishes on the table, and her eyes rested on a picture of her favorite Dali painting she put up many years ago.	Filler
(9) The rest of the room was hard to make out because the curtains were drawn.	Filler
(10) Meanwhile, Carl was feeling extremely depressed.	Consequent
(11) M E _ _ _ _ _	Word Completion
(12) Why was Carl feeling depressed?	Final Question

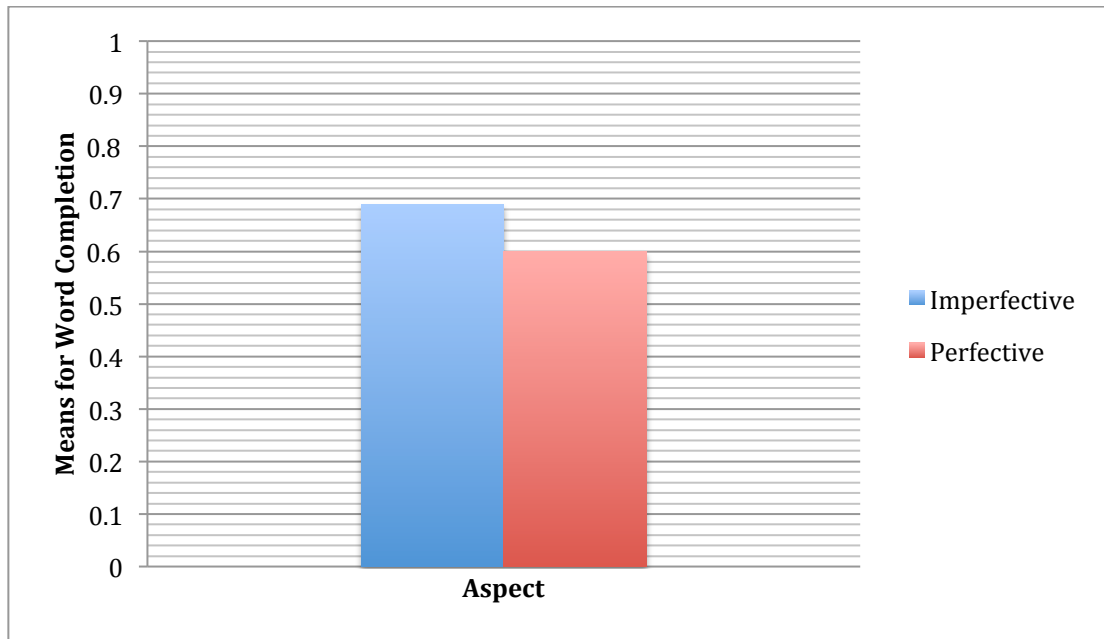
The working memory completion for data point collection occurs at (11). When the antecedent in (5) is in the imperfective as opposed to the perfective, the student would be more likely to write 'message' as a response to the word-edge completion task than in the perfective. Writing the word 'message' would show that the antecedent was reactivated and therefore still available for being the cause of the consequent. The imperfective would have a higher likelihood of prompting causal inferences since it is incomplete, and therefore ongoing. Likewise, it is predicted that more answers to questions about the cause refer back to an imperfective situation than to a perfective.

#### Long-Term Working Memory

##### Pre-Instruction

Participants noticed the imperfective aspect at a frequency of .69 compared to .60 in the perfective (c.f. Figure 2). These results are in line with what I expected to see based on previous research findings, but the margin of difference is minute. In fact, the difference between imperfective and perfective had a p-value greater than .05 showing it to be statistically insignificant. The p-value for the pre-test data was .29.



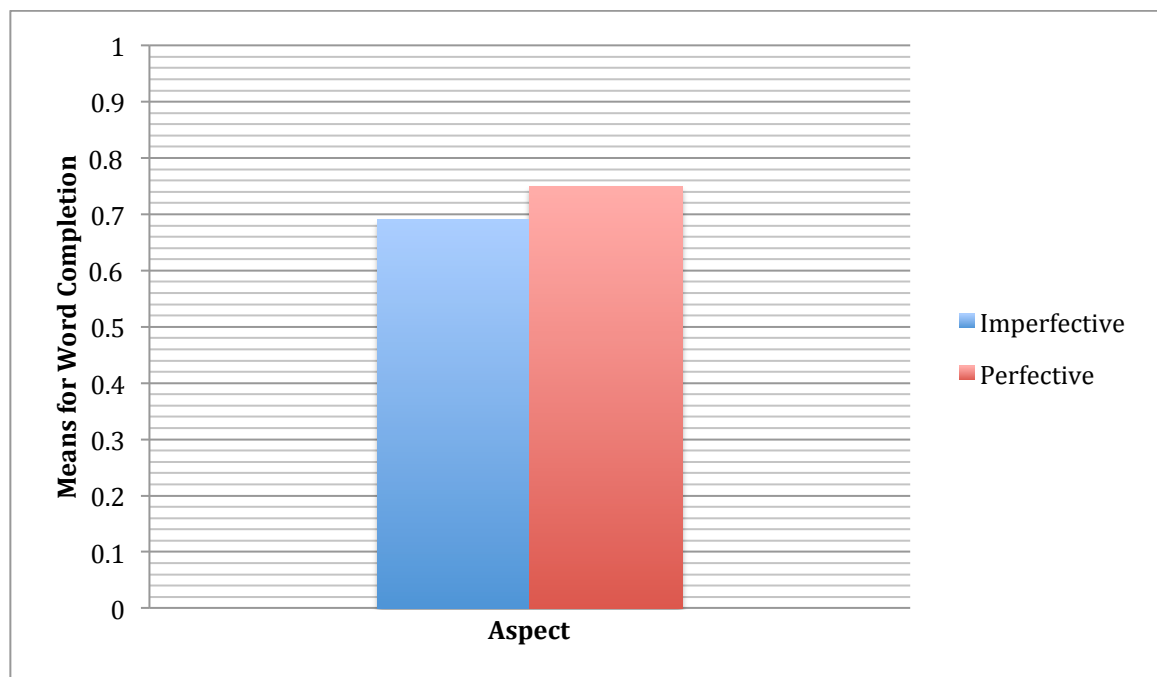


*Figure 2: Word Edge Completion Before Instruction*

#### Post-Instruction

For the immediate post-test for LTWM, I repeated the same procedures as in the pre-test. As shown in Figure 4, students completed word-edges in the imperfective-aspect condition at a frequency of .69 compared to .75 in the perfective-aspect condition. The difference between the two was not statistically significant with a p-value of .32. Students in this case seemed to notice the perfective aspect more often than the imperfective, but because of the p-value shown it could be coincidence or the variation of content in the narratives themselves. In fact, the mean frequency in the imperfective turned out to be the same in both the pre- and post-instruction conditions, whereas the frequency is higher in the perfective condition post instruction. Although this difference is noticeable, it is not statistically significant. This shows that participants' attention may have been drawn to the perfective condition after instruction, giving

unexpected results. Interference from L1 might also be a factor here. Alternatively, the results indicate participants may be potentially avoiding the imperfective in the immediate post-test. After instruction, students seemed to prefer the perfective slightly more often than the imperfective (cf. Figure 3). These findings align with previous research that indicates it is not uncommon for a dip in understanding to occur after instruction, as noticed in post-test results by both Feyder (2010), whose results showed a dip after about one week of instruction, and Kivimagi (2013), whose results showed a dip after same-day instruction.

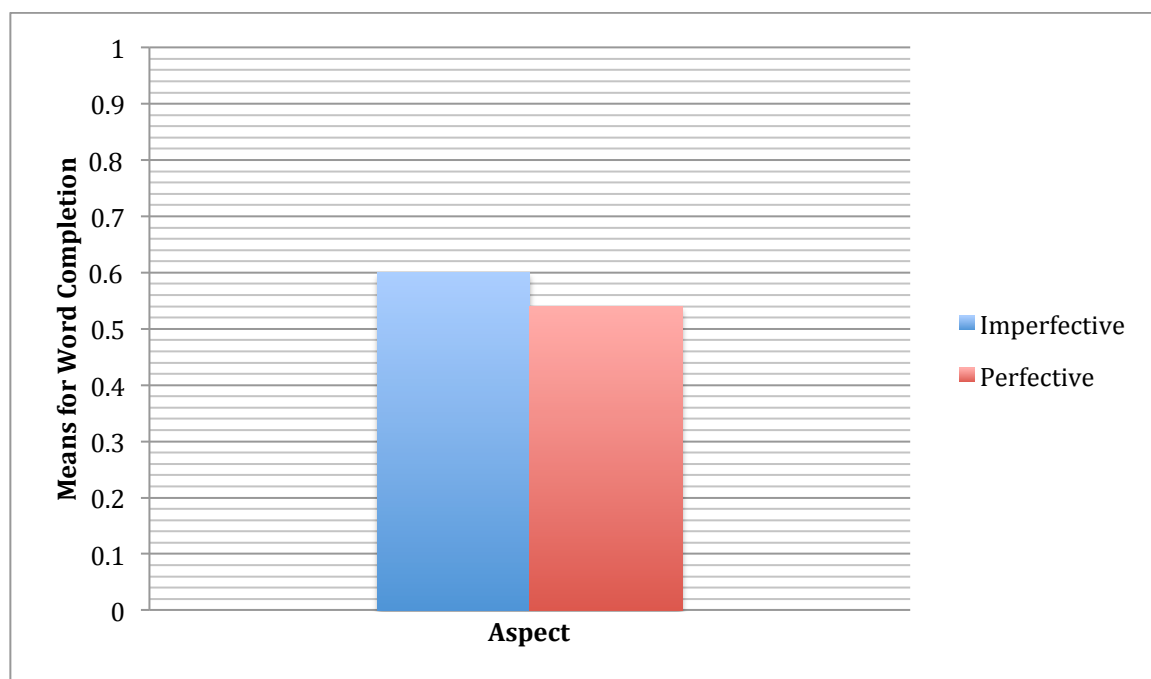


*Figure 3: Word-Edge Completion Post-Instruction*

#### Delayed Post-Instruction

As before, I repeated the same procedures that I used in the pre-test and the immediate post-test for LTWM. As shown in Figure 4, students completed word-edges in the imperfective condition at a mean frequency of .60 and in the perfective at a mean frequency of .54. The difference between the two approached

significance, with a p-value of  $<.10$ . Students in this case appeared to process the imperfective aspect more often than the perfective, a reversal from the immediate post-test, but because the p-value was greater than .05 again, these results will have to be verified. Also, since this delayed post-test was given 35 days after the pre-test and instruction, the time delay likely contributed to the drop in retention. Students retained a slightly reduced mean frequency in the imperfective condition between the post-test and delayed post-test; however, there was a large drop in the mean frequency retained in the delayed post-test for the perfective condition, which was very marginally significant with a p-value of .12.



*Figure 4: Word-Edge Completion Delayed Post-Instruction*

#### Comparing Pre-, Post-, and Delayed Post-test Instruction

The amount of processing imperfective aspect showed some encouraging results. As Table 5 highlights, the data approached significance for the delayed post-test with a p-value of  $<.10$ . The data collected for LTWM was statistically

insignificant for the pre-test, with a p-value of .29 and for the post-test, with a p-value of .32. Participants showed the greatest accuracy after instruction at the delayed post-test, which may be attributed to the fact that their aspect understanding has started to shift in the expected direction. The results between the post-test and delayed post-test for the imperfective predictable showed a slight reduction in retention, but overall the accuracy rate dropped by a margin of less than 10 percent (c. f. Figure 5).

Table 5: LTWM Data

*Mean Frequencies, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests of Word Completion Task*

<i>Data Location</i>	<i>T-Test</i>	Aspect			
		<u>Imperfective</u>		<u>Perfective</u>	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pre-test	0.29	0.69	0.38	0.60	0.45
Post-test	0.32	0.69	0.38	0.75	0.38
Delayed Post-test	0.10	0.60	0.45	0.54	0.50

The results for the perfective aspect showed unexpected results. Participants did show improvement between the pre-test and the immediate post-test, but the results for the delayed post-test dropped well below even the pre-test results. This

is contrary to my predictions that noticing with textual enhancements and explicit instruction impacts retention over time.

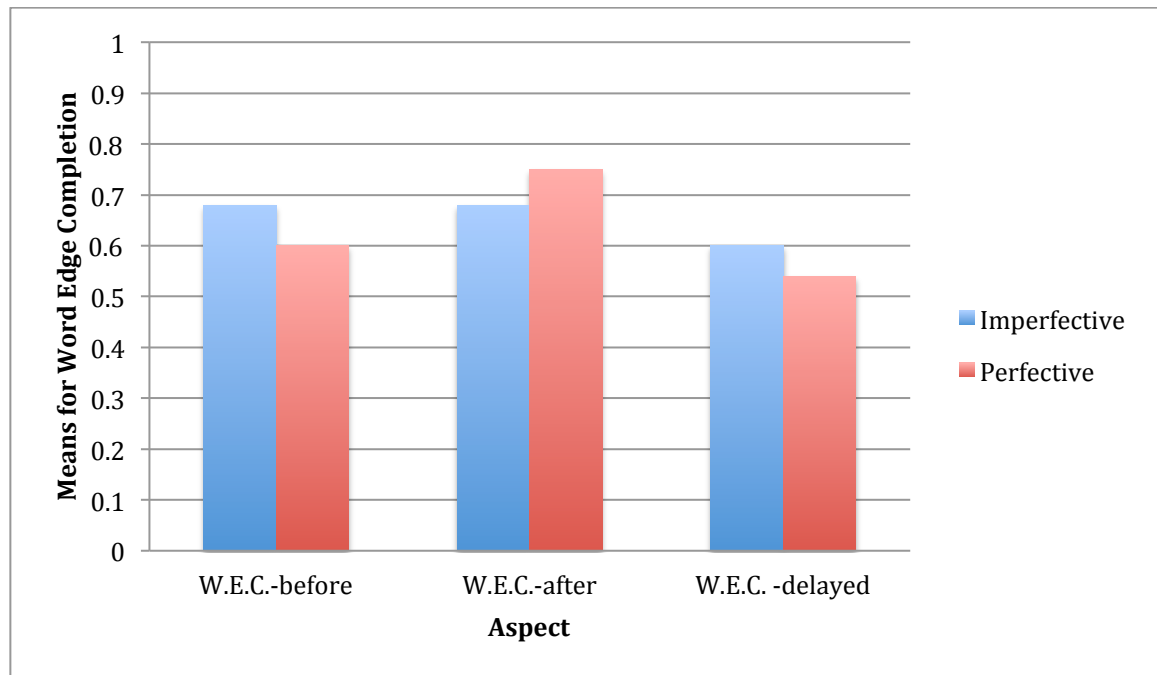


Figure 5: Overall Results for Word-Edge Completion

### Long Term Memory

#### Pre-Instruction

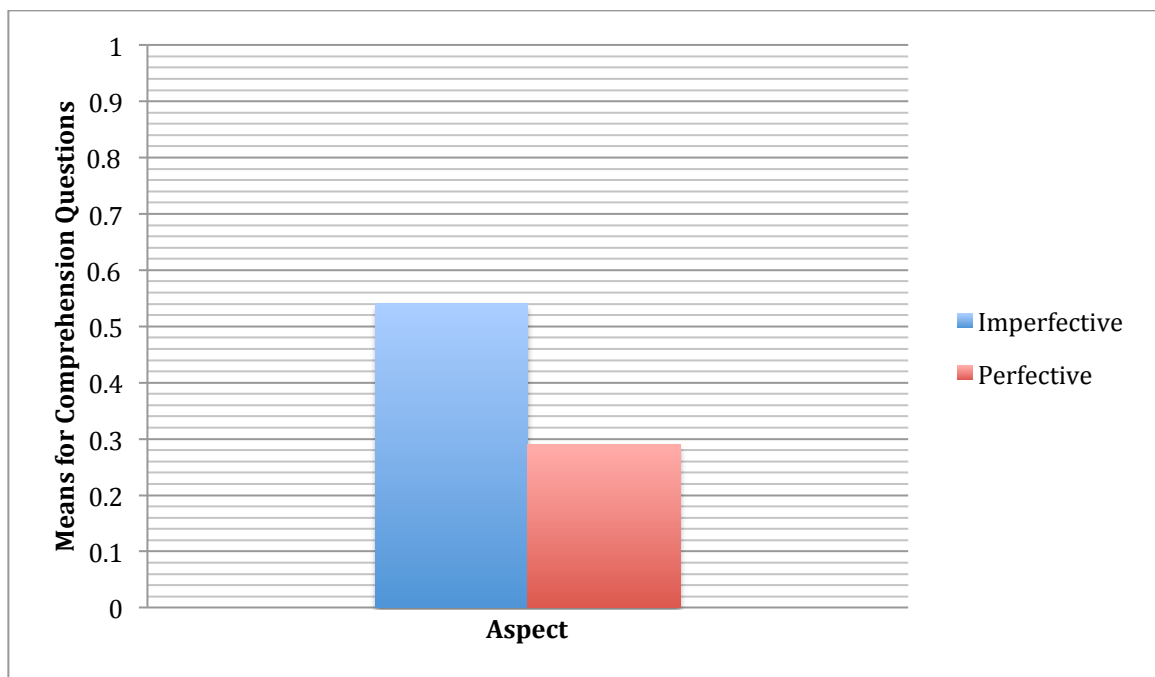
I tested for content in LTM by asking a comprehension question at the end of each narrative. I will show how this was done by using the example 'Moving In' shown in Table 5. After reading the story, with two antecedents, participants were asked a question. This led participants to answer with one of the two antecedents. If the first antecedent was mentioned, we could conclude that antecedent 1 was still available for understanding at the end of the narrative. For instance, if the aspect in (5) was in the imperfective, Miriam could be in the middle of preparing the email and that could contribute to why Carl was feeling depressed since he hadn't heard

from her yet. If the aspect in (5) was in the perfective, Miriam would be finished with composing and sending the email, so the reason for Carl's depression would fall on antecedent 2. In short, antecedent 1 would be a more likely choice for the question in line (12) if the aspect occurred in the imperfective rather than in the perfective.

Table 6: *Moving in-(Long-Term Memory)*

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>Causal Structure</b>
(1) Carl and Miriam had been dating for several years.	Setting
(2) He recently asked her to move in with him, and she had promised to let him know by today.	Initiating Event
(3) It was almost noon, and he had been checking his e-mail account all morning to see if she had said yes.	
(4) But Miriam had been very busy in the morning and did not have time to write him her positive answer.	
(5) She finally <i>was sending</i> / <i>sent</i> the message.	Antecedent 1
(6) Then, her financial agent called to tell her that he had just spoken with Carl about their joint stock market portfolio's terrible performance.	Antecedent 2
(7) During the call Miriam's eyes wandered across the room.	Filler
(8) She saw the dishes on the table, and her eyes rested on a picture of her favorite Dali painting she put up many years ago.	Filler
(9) The rest of the room was hard to make out because the curtains were drawn.	Filler
(10) Meanwhile, Carl was feeling extremely depressed.	Consequent
(11) M E _ _ _ _ _	Word Completion
(12) Why was Carl feeling depressed?	Final Question

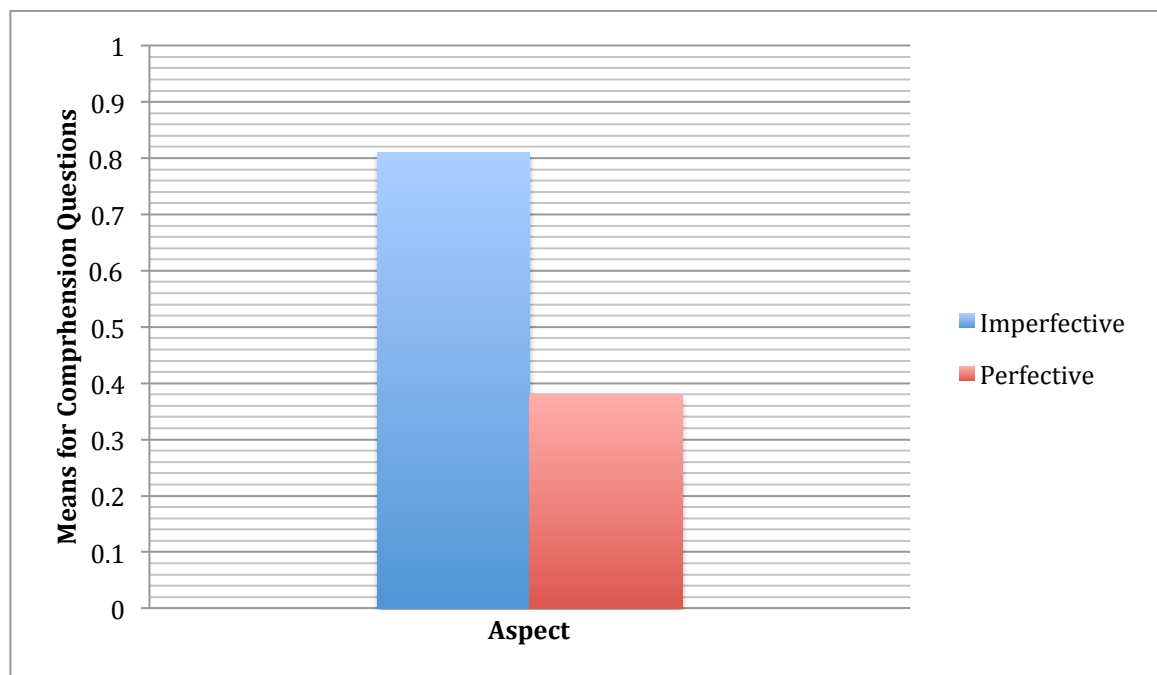
The LTM pre-test had students referring to the imperfective situation at a mean frequency of .54 and referring to the perfective situation at a mean frequency of .29. These results were in the right direction, i.e. imperfective situations were remembered more often than perfective ones, but the difference had a p-value of .15, indicating there was no significant difference between the two. This lack of significance may have been due to the low power due to the low number of participants in this study and may possibly be significant with more participants. This lack of significant difference in the pre-test was expected and has been shown in previous studies by Meidal (2008), Schramm (2012), and Kivimägi (2013).



*Figure 6: Written Responses to Comprehension Questions Pre-Instruction*

### Post-Instruction

Imperfective antecedents were referenced after instruction at a mean frequency of .81 and perfective antecedents were noted at a mean frequency of .38. As detailed in Table 6 below and shown in Figure 7, LTM tests given immediately following instruction revealed a highly significant difference between imperfective and perfective aspects with a p-value of .02. It appears that after instruction, participants were more likely to use the imperfective antecedents for inferencing than they were to use perfective ones. It also appears there was a notable increase in inferencing in the imperfective condition when comparing the pre-instruction and post-instruction results of .54 to .81 respectively. A t-test revealed that this difference was almost marginally significant, which likely may be attained with a larger participant pool. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this research project to attain these results.



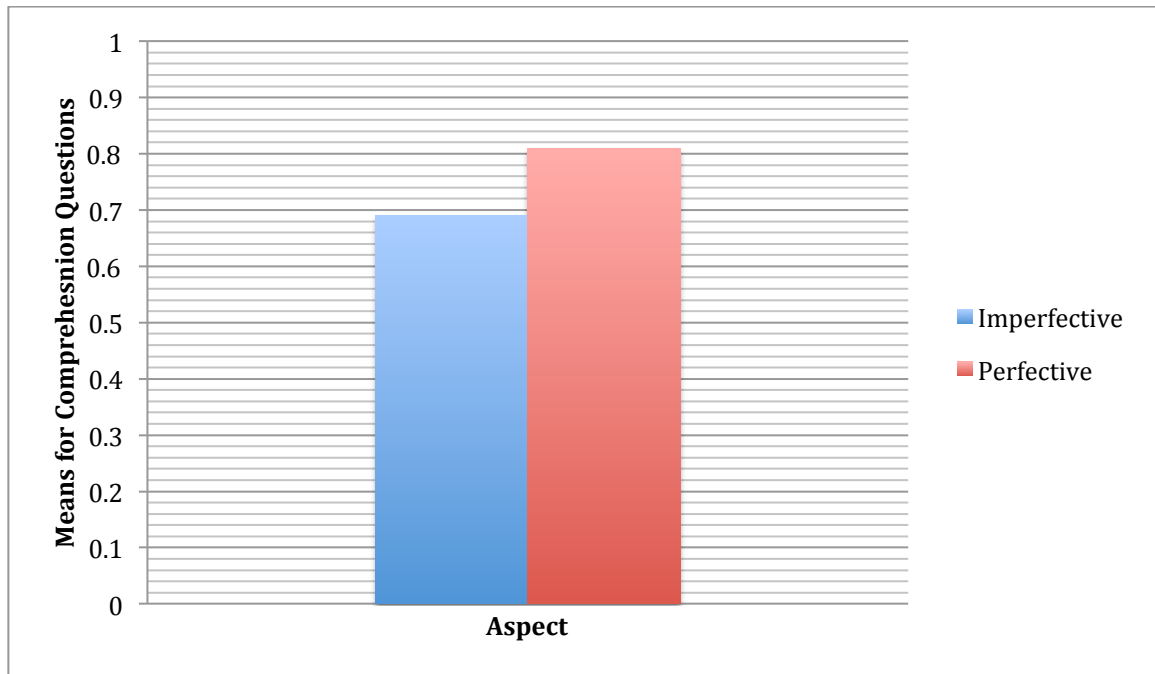
*Figure 7: Written Responses to Comprehension Questions Post-Instruction*



### Delayed Post-Instruction

For the delayed post-instruction, imperfective aspect was understood at a mean frequency of .69 and perfective aspect at a mean frequency of .81. This revealed statistically insignificant results with a p-value of .22. These results were surprising since both the pre-test and immediate post-test showed students to be more likely to use the imperfective when inferencing. Even though the imperfective results in this data set were still well above the pre-test results, which was expected, the fact that the perfective results appeared to more than double was greatly unexpected.

One possible explanation for this could be suppression. Suppression occurs when students make older information less accessible when in the process of learning new information (Gernsbacher, 1997). Students in this case could have been learning about other grammatical features during regular class time, which caused them to focus more on the perfective aspect and suppress the older knowledge regarding the imperfective. However, since the difference between the recall of situations in the two different aspects was not significant, more data is needed.



*Figure 8: Written Responses to Comprehension Questions Delayed Post-Instruction*

#### Comparing Pre-, Post, and Delayed Post-test Instruction

The amount of processing imperfective aspect showed some unexpected results. Participants showed the greatest accuracy after instruction, which was predicted. The results between the post-test and delayed post-test for the imperfective showed a reduction in retention, but overall the accuracy rate between the pre-test and the delayed post-test showed an overall increase by a margin of about 15 percent (c. f. Figure 9), which was not significant however.

Table 7: LTM Data

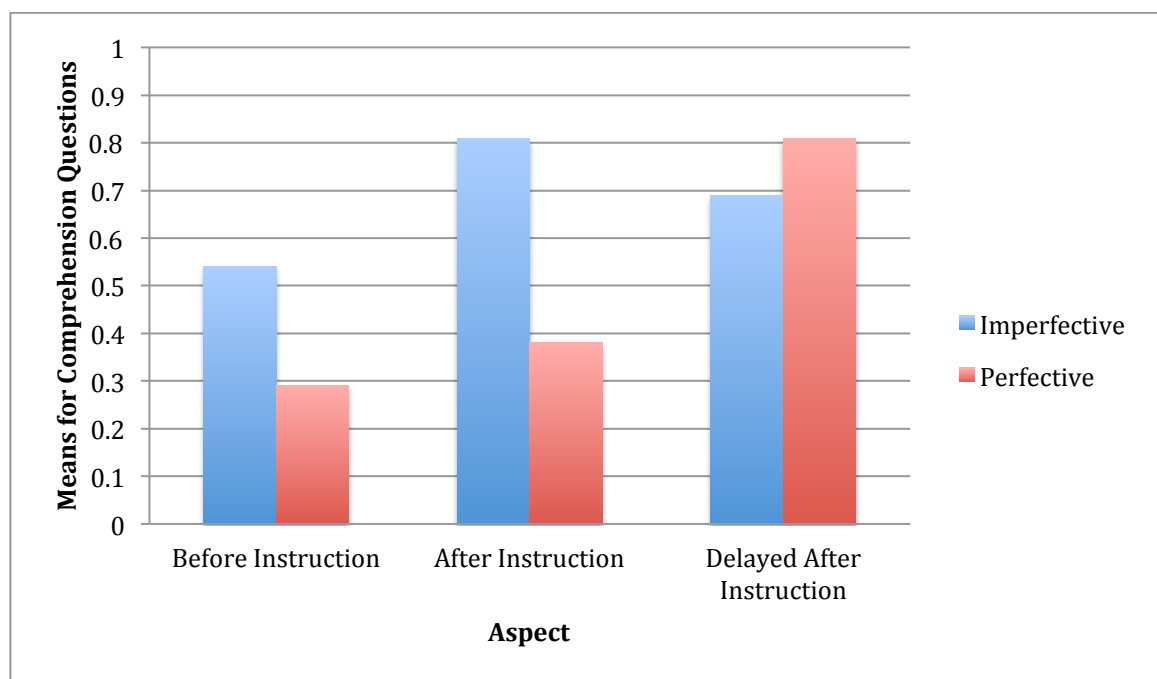
*Mean Frequencies, Standard Deviations, and T-Tests of Comprehension Questions*

<i>Data Location</i>	<i>T-Test</i>	Aspect			
		<u>Imperfective</u>		<u>Perfective</u>	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pre-test	0.15	0.54	0.42	0.29	0.32
Post-test	0.02	0.81	0.26	0.38	0.26
Delayed Post-test	0.22	0.69	0.38	0.81	0.21

As Table 7 highlights, the data on the difference between recall of situations in the perfective versus the imperfective aspect collected for LTWM was statistically insignificant for the pre-test, with a p-value of .15 and for the delayed post-test, with a p-value of .22. The data collected for the immediate post-test, however, was statistically significant with a p-value of .02. The results for the perfective aspect also showed unexpected results. Participants did show improvement between the pre-test and the immediate post-test, but the results for the delayed post-test greatly increased to well above the post-test results. This seems to support the theory that noticing with textual enhancements and explicit instruction would result in retention in memory over time, as results shown in Figure 10 indicate, when the

perfective condition was present; this difference was highly significant with a p-value  $<.001$ .

However, it is worth noting the aspectual difference and higher relevance of imperfective aspect was not retained in memory over a longer period of time in the same way that perfective aspect was. One possible reason for the jump in perfective aspect, which was outside the focus of instruction, may have a correlation with prior learning experiences in students' educational background. Prior knowledge of perfective aspect may have been reactivated prior to the delayed post-test, which could have had an effect here.



*Figure 9: Overall Written Responses to Comprehension Questions*

#### Overall Analysis

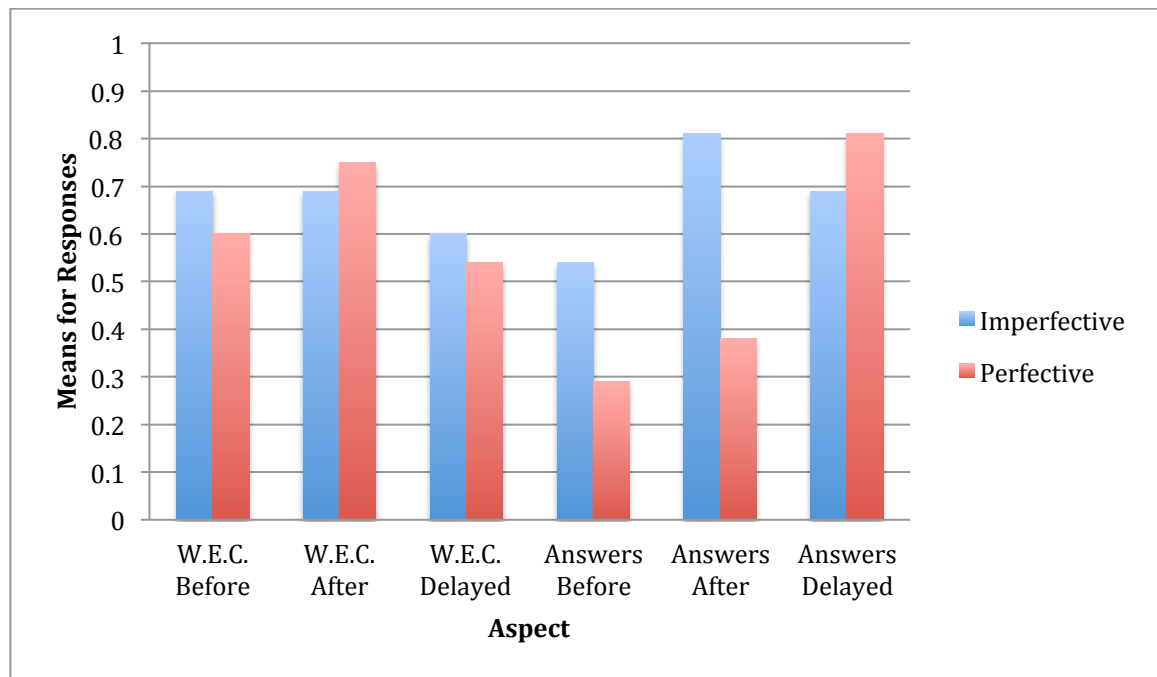
##### LTWM vs. LTM

In the pre-instruction data collection for LTWM, participants were slightly more likely to correctly reference the imperfective over the perfective. Similarly,

there was also no statistical significance in the LTM pre-instruction results and a slight preference for remembering imperfective situation. This preference could be due to simply noticing and remembering the textually enhanced portion of the narrative (Sharwood-Smith, 1993). It is possible that the lack of a significant difference happened because students may not have had the skills to answer some of the questions using one of the given antecedents. The Discourse Hypothesis for interlanguage development states that learners use emerging verbal morphology to distinguish foreground from background in narratives (Hopper, 1979). The Discourse Hypothesis predicts that perfective aspect and foregrounding develop first, so there may be a skill issue that occurs with some English learners because the imperfective aspect, as well as other background information, are not developed yet (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). This could result in data from this study appearing to lack significance.

In the post-instruction results for LTWM, the difference between the imperfective and the perfective indicates a lack of significance and the results did not follow the predicted outcome. Students were more likely to reference the perfective over the imperfective, which could be because according to the Discourse Hypothesis, simple past is the aspect that develops first (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). However, the results in this post-test were fairly surprising since instruction focused on imperfective aspect. Students were to correctly fill in the word-edge completion assuming they noticed the textual enhancement in the antecedent, so one would expect the results for both imperfective and perfective to be somewhat evenly distributed because students were able to cue in on the textual enhancement

and thus refer back to the antecedent to access the word. Since the difference was not significant, perfective and imperfective are early equal. This is likely the case here since the results appear to follow this anticipated pattern, as seen in Figure 10 below.



*Figure 10: Comparing Overall LTWM and LTM Results*

In contrast, as shown in Figure 10, the results for the LTM post-instruction show statistical significance between the imperfective and perfective aspects in the post-instruction test. It seems that after instruction, students were more likely to use the imperfective antecedents than the perfective by a fairly high margin. Presumably, the significant difference between the two aspectual conditions in the LTM in the post-instruction test may have shown up partly because this was the focus of the instructional period. The explicit instruction of aspectual meanings with practice in context using this skill likely gave the students time to become comfortable using this grammar form and its associated meaning. By having

lightened the cognitive processing load, students could focus on how the form impacted the outcome of the story and make appropriate inferences accordingly (Sharwood-Smith, 1991). Explicit instruction in the meaning of the two aspects and on the subsequent inferencing appears to have been helpful in this case.

For the delayed post-test in the LTWM, the difference between the imperfective and the perfective approached significance and students did seem to retain the imperfective at a slightly higher rate than the perfective. This was a result in the expected direction due to the fact that imperfective situations were remembered more often than the perfective ones. It appears that participants were more likely to use the imperfective condition after instruction, which is similar to results shown in post-instruction LTWM discussed earlier in this chapter. Previous researchers have found similar results in their studies (Meidal, 2008; Schramm, 2012; and Kivimägi, 2013). In comparison, there was also no significance in the LTM delayed post-test. There was a mean of .69 in the imperfective and a mean of .81 in the perfective with a p-value of .22. Much like the immediate post-test result for the LTWM, the result for the LTM delayed post-test showed the unanticipated spike in the reference to perfective aspect. This is especially unusual since there was only a slight increase in the recall of perfective situations between the pre-test and immediate post-test and students showed a preference for recall of imperfective situations. Although this result shows retention over time for both imperfective and perfective aspects, which was predicted, it is unusual that the delayed post-test would show such an uptick in the perfective. This could be that students reverted

back to using simple past (perfective aspect) when reading a narrative, similar to the results for post-instruction results for LTWM (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

### Summary

The word-edge completion results probing LTWM content showed some results that were similar to previously conducted studies, with the exception of the results from the immediate post-test. The overall data did not have as conclusive results regarding awareness of aspect as the question-answering LTM data did. However, this may have been caused by or at least influenced by suppression. The LTM results did support what was predicted: growth and retention of remembering aspectual meanings over time.

This study asked the following guiding questions: *Does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to greater understanding of causal inferences in narrative context? Does a delayed post-test show that implicit teaching contributes to integration into a learner's knowledge base for later acquisition and not just lead to intake?* I was able to conclude that after receiving explicit instruction during a lesson that focused on form, students were more likely to notice imperfective aspect, which led to a greater incidence of making correct inferences.

One of my research questions asked: Does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to a greater understanding of causal inferences in a narrative text? Based on my findings, the combination of noticing textual enhancement with explicit instruction of aspect did lead to students making correct inferences. I found that immediately after instruction, students were more



likely to use a perfective than an imperfective in the word-edge completion, but the results for the delayed post-test were more in line with what I predicted. In general, this study seems to indicate that providing textual enhancement proved effective in helping students notice aspectual differences and in the transferring of input to intake, as suggested by noticing supporters (Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995; Kioez-Ortega & Salaberry, 1998; Schmidt, 1990).

Students were also more likely to reactivate and mention imperfective for the comprehension question. This addressed the research question: does explicitly teaching aspect to advanced-level adult learners of English lead to a greater understanding of causal inferences in a narrative text? It seems that in this situation, participants were able to pick up on tense and aspect due to instruction. During instruction, I explained the meaning of imperfective and perfective aspect and their related forms. I explicitly stated that when the imperfective is used, an event is ongoing and therefore incomplete and when the perfective is used, an event is complete. Participants were then given the opportunity to practice making inferences and causality connections with short story narratives. They read these narratives and made inferences based on the aspect used in the story. These results contradict the claim that tense and aspect is not learned any faster with instruction made by Bardovi-harlig and Reynolds (1995). On the contrary, it appears explicit instruction and noticing used in my research may support the claim that research suggests students struggle to process aspect appropriately without assistance (Blythe, 1997). Ultimately, the participants in this study did not learn the significance of imperfective aspect in question-answering. It is possible that when

participants were given space to absorb the new information presented in this study, some of the older learning patterns emerged. These differing patterns may reflect a shift in aspect comprehension over time. Therefore, the findings indicate the affect of teaching imperfective aspect appear to boost working-memory awareness and long-term memory in the short term, but seem to subside over time. There also seems to be an insecurity; in WM, learners begin heading in the right direction, but when given a 'test-like' final question with some space between instruction and the 'test', the old pattern prevails.

In the next section, I will discuss implications of this study as well as some of the shortcomings of this project. I will also suggest a few ideas for future research.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

### Future Research

Based on the conclusions of this research study, I have listed suggestions for future researchers to consider:

- (1) Set up a comparative study utilizing more than 25 students for results to achieve significance.
- (2) Oral responses could be collected for comprehension question in addition to written responses.
- (3) Spend more time working on students' attention to forms and what that means as it connects to the text.

### Comparative Study

One thing that could be looked at for future research is to compare students who receive instruction with students who receive no instruction. The two groups would still be given the same textual enhancements; however, one group of students would receive instruction on noticing the aspect based on color and also, what aspect means in order to correctly comprehend a narrative. A control group would be given the same materials, but would receive no instruction on noticing aspect or about how aspect contributes to overall comprehension of a passage. In the current study, all students received instruction. Another researcher could determine the effectiveness of instruction by comparing two groups: a treatment group and a control group of fifteen or more participants per group.

### Oral Response for Comprehension Question

It would be helpful for many students to be able to indicate their responses orally, in addition to giving just a written response. Many teachers are aware that for students learning a language, it is generally true that written proficiency follows oral proficiency in language development. Therefore, it is probable that participants would express inferences that they had not written down if given the opportunity to respond orally and discuss their understanding of the given form and how that aspect relates to the overall result of the narrative.

### More Focus on Forms Practice Beforehand

One final suggestion for future research would be to incorporate more explicit instructions on the connection between forms and meaning. This additional component would perhaps assist students noticing by highlighting their awareness of aspect beforehand. This may also assist the transfer of input into intake due to greater practice opportunities over a longer period of time. If a researcher went this route, a pretest would need to be done ahead of the instruction to get a true baseline, but the post-test and delayed post-test could be stretched out to give students more time to incorporate what they are learning.

### Shortcomings

The study showed that instruction worked to help students pay attention or notice aspect and make appropriate inferences. Due to the small scale of this study, a future study incorporating a greater number of participants would produce more conclusive results. Additionally, there were some unusual results in the pre-test and immediate post-test for LTWM as well as in the delayed post-test for LTM. The

potential reasons for these unexpected results were difficult to ascertain in this smaller sample but may get clarified in a larger one.

### Reflection

As a practicing classroom instructor, I will continue to help my students focus on form as a continued component of grammar instruction. I am interested to see if highlighting various features is effective in other academic areas for language learners (such as pronunciation, parts of speech, listening activities, etc.) as far as noticing plays a role in awareness. I am interested in sharing this research with colleagues in my field and collaborating on ideas for improved instruction.

Another take away I received from completing this research project was the importance of research-based information in this field. In order to stay abreast of new research findings in the field of ESL, it is important to incorporate time into my planning and an intention to stay interested in current research. With more knowledge and better techniques, along with collaborative time with my peers, I will be a better-prepared and informed instructor for my students.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter consisted of a review of this study's research questions. After recapping the guiding questions, I followed up with suggestions for future research that could help practitioners better understand the learning process our students use, see how long the effects of given instruction last, and provide us more insight into what instructional and procedural enhancements best benefit the learners we serve. This final chapter ended with my reflection on how I will use the results of this research to inform my instruction in future applications.

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## Appendix A-Narratives

**Running Late**

It was late when Pat got up. She did not have time for breakfast so she grabbed a shiny piece of fruit from the fruit bowl. Pat rushed out the door. On her way downstairs, she *was eating* / *ate* the apple. Near the exit, the janitor was mopping the floor. This reminded her that it was the day of the office cleanup. She would have to go through her papers and get things off the floor. Pat liked organizing her work place since the next day all of her documents were back where they belonged. Next thing she knew, Pat was cringing in pain.

A P \_ \_ \_

R \_ \_ \_

Why was Pat cringing in pain?

**Work Day**

Rebecca and Tanya decided to get some work done around their apartment. In the morning they painted Tanya's room. In the afternoon they waxed the floors. Now it was evening. Rebecca was tired, sat down, and started reading through her old magazines. Tanya still wanted to put up her favorite picture. She marked the wall and *was hammering* / *hammered* in the nail. Rebecca, while getting one of her magazines, bumped into a big stack of books, which came crashing down. Tanya sighed in relief. It was a good thing that she had moved her antique doll collection. She was an art collector and really liked those dolls. Some of them came from faraway places and were dressed in ethnic clothes. A neighbor called to complain about the noise.

N \_ \_ \_

O T \_ \_ \_

Why was there so much noise that a neighbor called?

## Back from Vacation

Sam had just come back from vacation, and things had really become backed up during his absence. So he worked on the computer code for a new task all day. In the afternoon, he finished writing the code and had to decide whether there was enough time to run it right away. After all, trying out new code often crashed the system, and it took forever to start up the computer again. Sam made his decision and *was testing* / *tested* the program. Exhausted, he played a self-designed computer game hoping that nobody had messed with it during his absence. He really needed a short break from his work, and he enjoyed playing on the computer tremendously. He sat back to get comfortable in his chair. He sipped coffee from his favorite mug. Then the screen froze.

P R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Y O \_ \_ \_

What caused the screen to freeze?

## Driving Around

Jean-Louis was driving along the cote d'Azur in his native San Tropez, when he noticed a leak in the cooling system of his vehicle. He was barely able to drive back to his house. He drove into the garage and immediately went to work. He *was replacing* / *replaced* the hose to the radiator. While Jean-Louis was getting a snack, his girlfriend Joelle jumped in the car wondering if he had finally put in a new battery. But she couldn't find the key. She searched all of her purse. She checked her pockets-still without luck. Then she remembered the key that was hidden in the garage. She got the key and climbed back into the car. When she turned the key, the car would not start.

H \_ \_ \_

S H \_ \_ \_ \_

Why didn't the car start?

## Home from School Soon

The kids would be home from school soon. Since they were usually starving, it was time to prepare dinner. Sandy cleaned all the vegetables she needed for the dish she wanted to prepare. She put all the ingredients into the pot and **was cooking / cooked** the meal. While getting some parsley from her garden to decorate the dish Sandy stopped to chat with Phyllis, who was grilling hamburgers. Phyllis always knew the latest neighborhood news. Another neighbor's daughter was seriously ill and had been told not to have children. Since things were not going smoothly in that daughter's marriage, she had gotten pregnant anyway. Now everybody was rather interested in the mother's reaction. After a few minutes, the two friends noticed the smell of something burnt.

M \_ \_ \_

B L \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Why was there the smell of something burnt?

## Assembling a Swing

Janet was assembling a swing in the front yard. To see the final size of the structure, she took all the pieces and loosely put them together. Janet asked Mike, her 12-year-old, to start with the yard work, while she was working on the swing. Mike wasn't too excited because he wanted to play baseball with his friends. He **was mowing / mowed** the lawn. When Janet returned from the hardware store where she had picked up a missing tool, she saw a dog frantically charging across all the neighbors' properties. Janet slowed down and set her signal. Traffic was heavier than usual. She had to wait a while to make her turn. When Janet glanced over to the swing it had been knocked down.

L \_ \_ \_

A N \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Why did the swing get knocked down?

## Emergency Operation

It was an emergency operation. Dr. Greene and Dr. Ross needed to prepare the patient as quickly as possible. Therefore Dr. Greene *was administering* / *administered* a new and somewhat risky procedure. Dr. Ross, well aware of a recent patient's death under similar circumstances, carefully gave an injection for the operation. She cleaned the instruments and placed them within the doctors' reach. All of a sudden, the patient's vital signs deteriorated.

P R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

D R \_ \_ \_

Why did the patient's vital signs deteriorate?

## Repair Jobs

Mother had noticed that a step on the stairs leading down to the basement needed to be repaired. She told Dad. So, on Saturday, Dad tackled the stairs, before doing several other repair jobs in the basement. He *was replacing* / *replaced* the board. The children had their blocks scattered all over the top of the stairs, when the phone rang. Mom answered, but it was for Dad. Mom and Dad have a small business, for which they needed to be available on Saturdays, too. Several years ago, they started selling homemade quilts Mom and her friends make. Dad was doing the advertising and accounting. Racing up the stairs, Dad stumbled and started falling.

B O \_ \_ \_

P A \_ \_ \_ \_

Why did Dad stumble?

### Day at the Office

In the morning, Gary's manager had said that he would be back later that evening and the proposal had to be on his desk then. This project was Gary's top priority and would take up a good portion of the day. Gary found all the necessary information and *was writing / wrote* the report. In the afternoon, Gary started feeling sick, but he stayed at work. A while later, one of his co-workers stopped by to ask him a question about semiconductors. Semiconductors was Gary's area of specialization, and he did not mind answering questions about them. In fact, the company was thinking about giving him a raise because of his superior knowledge in that area. Right before quitting time there was a birthday party, but Gary just couldn't go.

R E \_ \_ \_ \_

D \_ \_ \_

Why could Gary not go to the party?

### Visiting the Grandparents

Shelley was visiting her grandparents in Northern Minnesota. It was a beautiful drive, the narrow two-lane road lined with trees, leaves beginning to turn. The road was empty except for this slow poke in front of her. Impatiently, she *was passing / passed* the pickup. Unexpectedly, a deer came charging out of the woods forcing her to turn the steering wheel to the right. Within split seconds, several thoughts raced through her head. The car belonged to the company her dad works for. Would she get in trouble for taking it without asking? Would he punish her by not letting her use his car again? She felt a strong bump.

P I \_ \_ \_ \_

S H \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Why did Shelley feel a strong bump?

### Time for Baths

It was definitely time for baths. The children had played outside in the rain and were all muddy and cold. Mr. Duncan went upstairs to the bathroom. He *was filling / filled* the tub with warm water. Back downstairs while waiting for his kids, the heavy rainfall reminded him to have the hole in the roof fixed. Meanwhile his daughter was taking her time. First she did not like the carrots, and then she needed more to drink. Mr. Duncan got up and got her some apple juice from the refrigerator. Right then, Mrs. Duncan came running into the kitchen to tell him that there was water dripping from the ceiling.

T \_ \_

T A \_ \_ \_

Why was there water dripping from the ceiling?

### Rob and Alisha's System

Rob and Alisha had a nice system going. Each day they split up their duties and rotated them. Today, Alisha took care of the living room, and Rob was down for kitchen chores. Rob *was washing / washed* the dishes. Alisha watered the plants and started arranging flowers in one of their special vases. She felt bad because it had been a terrible day for her. She overslept, missed her bus, and was reprimanded by her boss. In her rush she forgot her purse. And on top of everything her lunch date did not show. Suddenly there was a shattering noise.

D I \_ \_ \_ \_

U N \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

What was the cause of the shattering noise?

### Christmas Celebration

Jodie was at the annual Christmas Celebration. She had really dressed up for the occasion. She was enjoying herself but needed to slip around the corner because her clothes felt uncomfortable. She *was adjusting / adjusted* her pantyhose. She also noticed that there was a huge mustard stain right on her special skirt. Jodie was very upset. It was one of her favorite skirts. It was made out of pink satin and was very becoming. She had gotten it as a present from her sister after finishing college. When her boss came around the corner, Jodie was so embarrassed.

P A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

N O \_ \_ \_

Why was Jodie embarrassed?

### Sunday Paper

Walter fetched the Sunday paper from the porch and sat down on the floor to look through it. Before he even touched the rest of the paper, he looked through the coupon section. Walter decided which coupons they could use. He grabbed a scissors from the table and *was cutting / cut* out all of those coupons with it. While slowly leaning against the shelves to support his back, Walter lost his balance. Immediately, he started worrying about the coupons. They might get wrinkled and ripped. Then he wouldn't be able to use them, which he couldn't afford. His job as a clerk just did not pay enough. He felt a strong pain.

S C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

P R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

What caused the pain when Walter lost his balance?



## Moving In

Carl and Miriam had been dating for several years. He recently asked her to move in with him, and she had promised to let him know by today. It was almost noon, and he had been checking his e-mail account all morning to see if she had said yes. But Miriam had been very busy in the morning and did not have time to write him her positive answer. She finally *was sending* / *sent* the message. Then, her financial agent called to tell her that he had just spoken with Carl about their joint stock market portfolio's terrible performance. During the call Miriam's eyes wandered across the room. She saw the dishes on the table, and her eyes rested on a picture of her favorite Dali painting she put up many years ago. The rest of the room was hard to make out because the curtains were drawn. Meanwhile, Carl was feeling extremely depressed.

M E \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

F E \_ \_ \_

Why was Carl feeling so depressed?

## Heavily in Debt

In the year 1790, Mozart was heavily in debt. Fortunately, one morning a wealthy patron asked him to write a short piece of music for a substantial sum of money. But there was one condition: Mozart had to finish it by the evening of the same day. The work proved very difficult because of Mozart's failing health. Mozart *was composing* / *composed* the sonata. To clear his mind, he went out with several of his friends and treated them to beer and wine. It was cold and snowy on that day in Vienna. Winter had finally set in. The snow was coming down in big, heavy flakes. People were shoveling sidewalks. When he returned home late that night, Mozart's wife started crying because there was not enough money to buy food for the family.

S O \_ \_ \_ \_

A \_ \_ \_

Why wasn't there enough money for food?

## Appendix B-Short Stories

### Short Stories: *Instruction, Guided Practice, and Independent Practice*

#### The Snowman

Winter was Julie's favorite season. When the fresh snow started falling she decided to make a snowman. She rolled up two giant balls of snow and put one on top of the other. She was placing the head on top when her dog, Max, ran up to her. Julie forgot about the snowman's eyes, nose, and mouth while Max danced around her legs. He was very excited to play in the new snow with Julie. She and Max were having such a fun time. It was time to go in for the night, but her snowman wasn't finished.

- a. Find the 'Place the head' phrase. Highlight the phrase *orange* if it is past progressive or *blue* if it is simple past.
- b. How much of the snowman was finished?

#### Allowance Money

Nick's parents would give him a \$1 allowance if he did all of his chores. He usually would save up just enough to buy a new video game. Today he needed to organize, dust, and sweep his room. Nick cleaned his room. Suddenly he heard the ice cream truck outside, so he made a run for it. His friends were outside playing soccer and he decided to join them. Nick was thrilled when he scored a goal. But the next day the thrill was gone when Nick opened his wallet at the video game store to find he did not have enough money.

- a. Find the 'clean his room' phrase. Highlight the phrase *orange* if it is past progressive or *blue* if it is simple past.
- b. Why wasn't there enough money for the game?

#### The Tooth

Jose's tooth was getting looser by the minute. He simply could not leave it alone while sitting in class. Wiggling it with his tongue had become a habit. For a quick snack, Jose was eating a delicious beef jerky. When he bent down to pick up the wrapper he had dropped, he hit his lip on the corner of the desk. He wasn't quite done with his task, but his class was lining up to go to gym. Jose still needed to change into his gym shoes. Next thing he knew he felt a sharp pain and he felt something pointy swimming around in his mouth.

- a. Find the 'eat the jerky' phrase. Highlight the phrase *orange* if it is in past progressive or *blue* if it is in simple past.
- b. Why did Jose lose his tooth?

### After School Duties

When Sam got home from school, his first job was to let the dog out. His second job was his homework. After a very hard day, Sam decided to play a game on the family computer because he needed a brain break. When he heard his Dad's footsteps up the stairs, Sam turned off the computer. Sam quickly started unpacking his backpack and realized he had never let the dog out. He had been in trouble with his dad earlier that month for his after school behavior. His dad had been so mad that Sam was grounded for a weekend. When Sam looked at his dad's face to say hello, he knew he was in trouble again.

- a. Find the 'turn off the computer' phrase. Highlight the phrase *orange* if it is in past progressive and *blue* if it is in simple past.
- b. Why was Sam in trouble again?

### The Science Project

After school, Brendan realized he needed some things for his big assignment. He went to the store and found a large poster and some markers. But when Brendan couldn't find the glue, he was told it was in row six. Brendan got the glue. Suddenly he bumped into someone, and he scrambled to hold his items. He went to the cashier, paid, and left the store. While walking home, he tried to enjoy his free time. When Brendan began working on his project he realized that there was no glue in his shopping bag.

- a. Find the 'get the glue' phrase. Highlight the phrase *orange* if it is in past progressive or *blue* if it is in simple past.
- b. Why was there no glue in his shopping bag?

Appendix C: Consent Form  
**Reading and Remembering Short Stories**  
 (April 2016)

You are invited to be in a research study, which investigates the psychological process involved in reading and remembering simple stories. You were selected as a possible participant because English is not your native language. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before signing this document, agreeing to be involved in this study. This study is being conducted by: *Christine Wytaske*, a graduate student at Hamline University and instructor at SWMetro.

**Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to find out if non-native speakers can be prompted to notice certain grammatical forms with the purpose of discovering how such forms are learned.

**Procedures:** *\*(This study should take approximately 60-75 minutes)*

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

- Read 15 very short (one paragraph) narrative texts. (After reading these stories, you will be asked to do two additional things:)
- 1. Complete a word completion task that may have occurred in the story
- 2. Write a one-sentence response to one comprehension question from story

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. This study will be published as part of a Master's Capstone and will be cataloged in Hamline's **Bush Library Digital Commons**, a searchable electronic repository. It may also be published or used in other ways. Results included in this paper will not include any information that would make it possible to identify any of the study participants. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to these records. Results will be shared with you.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate or not will in no way affect your current or future relations with SouthWest Metro Educational Cooperative or the instructor, Christine Wytaske. If you choose to participate, you are free to not answer any question or to withdraw from this study at any time with no negative consequences. This study does not involve any risks.

**Approval Statement:**

I have received approval from the School of Education at Hamline University and from SouthWest Metro Educational Cooperative's Executive Director, Darren Kermes, to conduct this study.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Christine Wytaske. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any questions later, you are encouraged to contact Christine Wytaske at [cwytaske@swmetro.k12.mn.us](mailto:cwytaske@swmetro.k12.mn.us) or 6125 Chasewood Pkwy, Apt. 224 Minnetonka, MN 55343 or (612)859-3975. ***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have asked any questions I have and have received answers. I consent to participate in this study.

NAME: (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D: Language Survey  
(April 2016)

1. What is your native language? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years have you studied English in school? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your current age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you studied other languages?      YES    NO  
If yes, which languages have you studied? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many years have you lived in the United States (or any other English speaking country)? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your level of education (any country/language)? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How confident are you when speaking English with friends? *(circle your answer)*  
  

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all								Extremely Confident	
8. How well can you express your thoughts in English while in class?  
  

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all								Extremely Confident	
9. How well do you understand what you read in your class?  
  

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all								Extremely Confident	
10. How confident are you expressing your ideas while writing in your class?  
  

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all								Extremely Confident	
11. How well do you understand English verb tenses in class?  
  

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all								Extremely Confident	